

APPENDIX K

VISUAL MANAGMENT

How is Scenic Attractiveness Measured?

Scenic attractiveness is typically measured through ground observation or aerial photo analysis. Landscapes are rated as Distinctive, Typical or Indistinctive, based on whether their attractiveness is considered to exhibit outstanding scenic quality; positive yet common quality; or low scenic quality, respectively. The process of determining Scenic Integrity involves placing a landscape into one of five categories (Very High, High, Moderate, Low, or Very Low) based on the quantity and quality of alterations to the landscape's natural form. The category "Unacceptably Low" is sometimes also used to describe very significant existing impacts. To simplify the analysis, the distance between the viewer and landscape is often used as a proxy for other factors. For analysis of large areas, landscapes are placed into one of four categories: Foreground (less than ½ mile between landscape and viewer), Middle-ground (1/2 mile to 4 miles), Background (greater than 4 miles), and Seldom Seen (not generally visible due to topography or other factors). It is preferable that this be based on location-specific research, such as user surveys, but may be estimated based on viewer characteristics (park visitor or local resident, for example) if specific information is not available.

Scenery Management System (SMS) is one of a number of methods developed to comply with federal legislation, such as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and National Forest Management Act of 1976, which require that scenery and aesthetic resources be addressed as part of federal land planning and management activities. For this analysis, the full SMS method was not applied. A constituent survey was not conducted. Instead contractors (EDAW) used relevant SMS-based techniques.

The following modified SMS inventory process was used, with steps completed in the following order:

1. Major viewpoints were identified for each area being analyzed, based on viewpoint-subject proximity, likelihood of unobstructed views, viewer attention, potential average number of viewers at a location, and/or expected average viewing duration.
2. Scenic Attractiveness was estimated by analyzing portions of the landscape expected to be visible from typical viewpoints, using Scenery Management System (SMS) guidelines. Attractiveness scores were determined relative to the attractiveness of typical landscapes in the Affected Environment (that is, the forest lands).
3. Distance Zone was estimated based on the distance from the viewpoint to the nearest portion of the unit, using distances zones described in SMS. A range of distance zones was used where a specific viewpoint-subject distance could not be identified, as in the cases of views from roads or scattered rural residences.
4. Concern Level was estimated based on the scale of use (number of viewers and duration of view) and expected degree of concern of typical viewers in regards to forestry activities. Viewers exhibiting a particular interest in an area (such as traveling to or using a recreational area or residents with dominant views of the forest) were rated as having High interest in scenery and all others a Moderate interest. Concern level estimates also addressed areas within viewsheds identified by DNR as having regional importance and for areas of concern identified at stakeholder and scoping meetings.

5. Scenic Integrity was estimated, using SMS guidelines, for the existing landscape based on harvest activity visible during site visits and in aerial photographs.

A Scenic Class was determined based on the SMS Scenic Class Matrix (USFS 1995). Where a range of Distance Zones was used, a range of Scenic Classes was generated.